

## SDC 2019 Annual Meeting Abstracts

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**Title: Young, Informal, and Sustainable. Young Land Informal Occupations in São Paulo, Brazil**



"International development has only recently started analyzing the temporality of informal settlements. Most research on slums and informal urbanization focuses on how to improve infrastructure and living conditions either via slum upgrading or via redevelopment and resettlement in public housing (Pimentel Walker 2016). This type of solution assumes a consolidated informal settlement. Others have aimed to prevent the formation of precarious slums by developing sites and services schemes (Owens, Gulyani and Rizvi, 2018). Slums have a life-cycle, they emerge, consolidate, and age. This research explores sustainable strategies for young informal occupations, especially those that are five years or younger.

Young land occupations are a main driver of peri-urban growth through the consolidation of informal housing in areas of environmental protection. In their early years, slums are subjected to legal challenges that evoke the narrative of environmental degradation and unsustainable practices to force eviction or deny urban services. By the time that municipalities assess that it is legally sound to upgrade them, it is often too late to guide their settlement patterns towards healthy and ecologically sensitive development (Pimentel Walker and Arquero de Alarcón, 2018). However, there is an opportunity within young communities to be proactive in their methods of land occupation towards greater sustainability. The early years of these occupations are critical for initiating sustainable strategies of occupation to minimize deforestation and environmental pollution, while seeding necessary socio-spatial infrastructures and providing healthy shelter for residents.

This investigation employs mix methods of data collection and analysis and an action-research methodological approach (Thiollent and Colette, 2017). Through a long-term partnership with the residents in two land occupations in the South of São Paulo, we co-developed a series of strategies for capacity building through community workshops with a technical, legal, environmental and sociological focus. The workshops gather oral histories narrating personal and community strategies of occupation, a community timeline with networking strategies to build knowledge on legal instruments and environmentally sustainable land occupation practices. With these, the project gives visibility to the phenomenon of peripheral young land occupations while devising mechanisms to build internal capacity in their formative years."